

Telehealth and Electronic Health Record Integration

Introduction

Many practices quickly pivoted their operations to implement or expand telehealth due to COVID-19.¹ Telehealth has proven to be an effective strategy to provide patient care while reducing spread of the virus and maintaining social distancing.² The integration of a telehealth solution with an electronic health record (EHR) system can improve practice workflows and provide better treatment for patients.³

Why Integration Matters

Implementing telehealth in a practice involves both operational and technical considerations. It is estimated that physicians spend about 37 percent of their day on administrative tasks.⁴ Telehealth integration with an EHR helps reduce administrative burdens.⁵ Benefits include:

- Eliminates the need to switch back and forth between different systems;⁶
- Provides real-time access to a patient's EHR, which improves clinical decision making;⁷
- Minimizes duplicate data entry;⁸
- Streamlines data collection and tracking to improve care coordination and quality reporting;⁹ and
- Simplifies scheduling and billing.¹⁰

Steps for Telehealth Integration

- Make a list of your practice's "must-haves" for integration to use when evaluating vendors;¹¹
- Compile a list of potential telehealth vendors by:
 - Researching existing solutions available through the practice's EHR vendor;¹²
 - Identifying third party telehealth vendors that integrate with the practice's EHR;¹³
 - Speaking to similar practices about their telehealth vendor experiences; and¹⁴
- Continuously evaluate challenges and work with the vendor to identify solutions.¹⁵



¹ Fierce Healthcare. *The COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-term impact on healthcare. Here are 4 changes to expect*, May 18, 2020. Available at: www.fiercehealthcare.com/tech/4-ways-healthcare-will-change-from-impact-covid-19-experts-say.

² Centers for Disease Control. *Using Telehealth to Expand Access to Essential Health Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, June 10, 2020. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/telehealth.html#:~:text=Telehealth%20services%20help%20provide%20necessary,personnel%20\(HCP\)%20and%20patients](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/telehealth.html#:~:text=Telehealth%20services%20help%20provide%20necessary,personnel%20(HCP)%20and%20patients).

³ Successive Technologies. *Integrating Telehealth Solutions with EHR: An Innovative Approach*, September 21, 2020. Available at: successivetech.wordpress.com/2020/09/21/integrating-telehealth-solutions-with-ehr-an-innovative-approach/.

⁴ HIT Consultant. *Why EHR Interoperability is Critical for Telehealth*, September 2, 2020. Available at: hitconsultant.net/2020/09/02/why-ehr-interoperability-is-critical-for-telehealth/#.X38TZmhKiUl.

⁵ Medical Transcription Services. *Significance of Integrating EHR And Telehealth To Provide Better Patient Care*, August 24, 2020. Available at: www.medicaltranscriptionservicecompany.com/significance-of-integrating-ehr-and-telehealth-to-provide-better-patient-care/.

⁶ InTouchHealth. *How Telehealth and EHR Technology Complement Each Other*. Available at: intouchhealth.com/how-telehealth-and-ehr-technology-complement-eachother/.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ eVisit. *What a telemedicine integration should be*. Available at: blog.evisit.com/what-a-telemedicine-integration-should-be.

⁹ Becker's Hospital Review. *How telehealth and EHR integration deliver complete, effective care while streamlining provider workflows*, October 12, 2017. Available at: www.beckershospitalreview.com/healthcare-information-technology/how-telehealth-and-ehr-integration-deliver-complete-effective-care-while-streamlining-provider-workflows.html.

¹⁰ See n. 3, *Supra*.

¹¹ American Medical Association. *Telehealth Implementation Playbook*. Available at: www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-04/ama-telehealth-playbook.pdf.

¹² See n. 6, *Supra*.

¹³ See n. 11, *Supra*.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ American Hospital Association. *Telehealth: A Path to Integrated Virtual Care*. Available at: www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/02/MarketInsights_TeleHealthReport.pdf.

Existing Integrations

The table below highlights existing telehealth integrations¹⁶ among the top ten EHR vendors¹⁷ used by practices in Maryland.¹⁸ Existing integrations include telehealth solutions that were developed by the EHR vendor, as well as integrations offered through a third-party vendor. There may also be the opportunity for other telehealth vendors that are not listed to integrate with EHRs. Practices are encouraged to contact the EHR vendor to learn more about their telehealth integration capabilities.

Telehealth Technology Vendor Portfolio

The Maryland Health Care Commission developed a portfolio with over 75 HIPAA-compliant telehealth vendors. The portfolio can save practices time evaluating telehealth solutions and the vendor providing the service. Users can sort by compatibility with medical devices (e.g., blood pressure cuffs), EHR integrations, and user ratings.

A copy of the portfolio can be accessed here:

mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/documents/TLHT_Telehealth_Portfolio_Protected.xlsm

Existing Integrations		
EHR Vendor	Telehealth Solution	Third-Party Telehealth Solution(s)
Allscripts	FollowMyHealth	Hale Health Keona Health Desk Medocity
Amazing Charts	Not available	DrFirst Updox
athenahealth	athenaTelehealth	Accuhealth eVisit Nod Avizia (Amwell) Healthchat OhMD Chiron Health JoinCareTeam OTTO Health ChronicCareIQ Klara Quintree Medical Clinic Q (Health Here) Luma Health RoweDocs ConnectOnCall MDLIVE Rhinogram DocResponse, Inc. MyCarePlan (Qure4u) SimpleVisit Epion Health SnapMD
Cerner	Not available	Amwell Keona Health Desk
eClinicalWorks	healow	Not available
Epic	Twilio	AmWell MDLive Telemed IQ BlueJeans QuickMeeting Mend TytoCare Caregility PatientTouch Companion Visuwell Cisco Pexip Vidyo ExtendedCare RxCap Zaurus InTouch Health swyMed Zoom Microsoft Teams Teladoc
Greenway	Greenway Telehealth	Chiron Health OTTO Health IM Your Doc Updox
NextGen	NextGen Telehealth	Not available
Office Practicum	OP Telemedicine	Not available
Practice Fusion	Not available	Updox

Note: The information included in this table was obtained from EHR vendor websites and representatives. The MHCC does not recommend or endorse any product or service. Click vendor names for more information.

Questions?

Contact Justine Springer, MHCC Program Manager justine.springer@maryland.gov

¹⁶ Existing integrations are connections that have already been established between the EHR and the telehealth vendor.

¹⁷ The top ten vendors were determined from information obtained from the Maryland Board of Physicians licensure renewal data 2016-2017.

¹⁸ Integration takes place by using an application programming interface (or API). It may be necessary to contact the EHR vendor to enable the telehealth service.